

## **New Year's Resolution**

As we approach the year 2024, it's time to consider New Year's resolutions. How often have you made resolutions, and how successful have you been in achieving them?<sup>1</sup> Research indicates that in 2023, only 9% of Americans managed to fulfill their resolutions.

Moreover, recent studies have highlighted some of the most common New Year's resolutions for 2024. The primary goal for many is to improve their fitness, with 48% of Americans expressing this desire. Following closely, 38% aim to enhance their financial status, while 36% prioritize enhancing their mental health. Additionally, 34% of people stated that their goal for 2024 is to lose weight.<sup>2</sup>

## **Personal Resolutions for 2024**

Lisa and I have consistently discussed the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle while nurturing our spiritual vitality. As a result, for the upcoming year, we've set two specific goals for ourselves in 2024. For maintaining a healthy lifestyle, Lisa's New Year's resolution is to shed a few pounds to comfortably fit into her favorite evening dresses, which she purchased in Korea for her wedding five years ago. She still keeps it in her closet for wearing it again. Meanwhile, I aim to develop healthier eating habits by incorporating more vegetables into my diet and reducing my consumption of coffee with cream and sugar due to its tendency to upset my stomach.

Nurturing our spiritual vitality, we aim to prioritize our personal devotional life and prayer time. While we've prayed separately before, in 2024, we plan to establish a dedicated time at home to pray together.

## **Pray not to fall into temptation.**

I will share with you some thoughts on how and why Jesus, the Son of God, prayed to God. I will also share a story from the Bible in which Jesus explains the importance of prayer. The first reason to pray is to gain strength against temptation. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" in Matt 26:41.

Did you see the sign on the table in our Church narthex that explains why we should wash our hands with sanitizer? It says "Wash your hands & say your prayer because Jesus & germs are everywhere. In the same way, Jesus asks us to pray because temptation is everywhere in our Christian life.

## **Example of Jesus' Prayers**

Jesus intentionally set aside the best time and place to pray to God. Luke 5:16 mentions that "Jesus often withdrew to lonely place and prayed." Also in Matthew 6:6, Jesus recommended to pray in the private room to God who sees everything for reward you.

These two stories in the Bible serve as some of the best examples of why and how Christians need to pray to God.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fisher.osu.edu/blogs/leadreadtoday/why-most-new-years-resolutions-fail>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/health/mind/new-years-resolutions-statistics/>

**Pastoral exhortation for 2024**

The year 2024 stands before us as another precious gift from God. It's a time to reflect and make New Year's resolutions, embracing how we can fully enjoy this divine gift. Let us make prayer the cornerstone of our lives, seeking God's wisdom, divine understanding, and clear guidance before initiating our plans and schedules.

I recommend practicing the 1-2-3 prayer routine: pray once a day, dedicate at least two minutes to prayer, and present three prayer requests to God for this year. Then, at the year's end, you can count on how God has answered your prayers.

I pray that 2024 will be remembered for a renewed commitment to the practice of prayer for our spiritual growth.

Pastor Cloud